



# Wyoming Department of Agriculture

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Dave Freudenthal, Governor

John Etchepare, Director

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November 24, 2004

Bureau of Land Management  
Pinedale Field Office  
P.O. Box 768  
Pinedale, WY 82941-0768

To the Pinedale Field Office:

Following are the comments from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) on the Environmental Assessment which discusses the impacts of changing the season of use on the Fayette Individual allotment and the Boulder Lake Common allotment.

Our comments are specific to our mission within state government which is to be dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As these amendments will have major impacts upon our agriculture industry, our natural resources, and the welfare of our citizens, we believe it's important that we be kept informed of proposed actions and decisions and that we continue to be provided the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

The WDA is in support of the Proposed Action, which is to change the season of grazing use and issue the grazing permit. Livestock grazing can be used as a critically important resource management tool to manipulate the range resource toward a desired condition.

Livestock grazing, in addition to providing forage for livestock, can be used to change the seral stage of the plant community, remove decadent plant growth to rejuvenate forage species, and improve the quality of forage for wildlife. Livestock grazing is an excellent tool for the reduction of hazardous fine fuels, thus reducing the potential for catastrophic wildfire and improving the wildland/urban interface. Grazing will also aid in the disappearance of noxious weeds and invasive species.

Private ranch land relies on federal grazing for social and economic productivity. The ability for ranchers to graze federal lands is critical for their operation to remain economically viable. This is a very important issue, as the impacts of subdividing private ranch land in the surrounding area will have an extreme-demonstrative effect on the wildlife populations, their prey base, and available open space and habitat. This subdivision of private ranchland is far worse on the ecosystem, especially when compared to the minuscule utilization of forage by livestock in an allotment. If grazing permits are removed, the BLM can count on the eventual removal of habitat on the private ranchland. Please ensure that your efforts will not have a significant adverse

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The Wyoming Department of Agriculture

is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life.

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11/24/2004

Fayette Individual / Boulder Lake Common Allotments

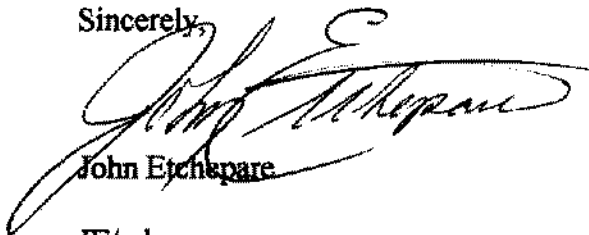
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financial impact on ranching, and therefore, a potentially devastating impact on wildlife and the natural resource base.

Again, we support the efforts of the Pinedale Field Office to address the impacts of changing the season of use, and we recommend that range health continue to be improved by continuing livestock grazing.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Etchepare", is written over a printed name label.

John Etchepare

JE/mh

CC: Governor's Planning Office  
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation  
Wyoming Stock Growers Association  
Wyoming Wool Growers Association  
Wyoming Game and Fish Department